INDIA

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This Supplement consists of a VERBATIM Report, specially drawn up for "India," of the Debates on Indian subjects in both Houses of Parliament, and questions put on such subjects and the answers given to them, arranged chronologically, from February 11th to 21st.

Imperial Parliament.

February 11*th*.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

THE QUEEN'S SPEECH.

SIAM, THE PAMIRS, AND CHITRAL.

The second Session of the 14th Parliament of Her Majesty the Queen was opened by Commission.

The Queen's Speech, which was read by the Lord Chancellor, contained the following passages relating to India :—

"An agreement has been concluded between my Government and that of the French Republic, having for its principal object the more secure establishment of the independence of the Kingdom of Siam. A copy of it will be laid before you.

"The Commissioners for the delimitation of the frontier separating my Indian Empire and the territory of Afghanistan from the dominions of the Emperor of Russia have agreed upon a line which has been accepted by myself and by the Emperor. . . . .

"On the north-west frontier of my Indian Empire the measures taken last year to secure an effective control over Chitral have been successful, and the engagements entered into by the border tribes for the maintenance and protection of the road from Peshawar have been loyally carried out without molestation or disturbance."

THE ADDRESS.—SIAM.

Lord STANMORE, moving "That an humble Address be presented to Her Majesty in reply to the Speech from the Throne," said in the course of his speech :—The agreement between this country and France with regard to the neutralisation of a great part of the kingdom of Siam is now completed, and is, therefore, open and subject to criticism, nor can it be affected by whatever is said. It may seem to some paradoxical, but I confess that I for one view that agreement with great satisfaction for the very reason that it affords nothing like a brilliant triumph to either party to the agreement. The complement of triumph is humiliation, and where humiliation exists there is usually soreness and disappointment ; and if the party humiliated be a great State, the consequences may be decidedly mischievous. Triumph is a legitimate thing very often, except when you have overcome right and established wrong ; but in the case of negotiations conducted on an equal footing between two parties who are equally convinced of their rights, and who are acting in perfectly good faith and honour, I am not at all sure that the solid advantage is always on the side of the party which has gained a triumph. I think this agreement ought to be regarded as satisfactory by all those who do not misunderstand it. But it has been misrepresented, and therefore, I suppose, has been misunderstood. It is said that what this agreement does is virtually to partition Siam ; that we have put the king, in what remains of his dominions, under the tutelage of two great Powers, and that they have taken the remnant to themselves. Nothing could be more inaccurate or unjust. The provinces of Siam which are not referred to in this agreement stand exactly on the same footing now as they did before the agreement. Should any interest, British or French, be affected in those provinces, either to the east or the west or centre of Siam, there is nothing to prevent those interests being safeguarded and looked after exactly as before. What has been done is this—that whereas before this agreement the whole of the kingdom of Siam was in the same condition as these provinces are now, the central and most important provinces of Siam have now been guaranteed in their neutrality. Neither France nor England can, without the consent of the other, move an armed force into that territory, and the two Powers are prepared to prevent any third Power from doing that which they themselves refrain from. That arrangement is a great advantage to the two great Powers concerned. It relieves them from many misgivings, it sets at rest many suspicions, and it prevents much misunderstanding. It is an advantage to Siam, because it leaves that country free to employ its whole resources in its own development, instead of in useless military defences which, in case of need, would probably serve it in very bad stead. It is a service to the whole world in settling questions which might give rise to unpleasant discussions in the future. It is true that Mongsin has been given up, and I admit fully that I mourn for the loss of that possession. To recede from territory once gained is, in Oriental countries, always attended with some risk. But if ever the risk in retrocession were reduced to a minimum, it is in this case. Mongsin is not a populous and extensive province ; it is a triangle of earth not larger than one of the smallest of English counties, with a population of less than 2,000, and with a reputation of possessing an especially deadly climate. The exchange of a land frontier for a fixed and evident river boundary is an absolute gain ; and, at all events, the price paid is well worth paying for the satisfaction of effecting an agreement which sets at rest so many matters of dispute.

The EARL OF ROSEBERY, in the course of his speech, said: I pass now to the agreement with Siam. The mover told us that the agreement with Siam filled him with unqualified satisfaction. I cannot help wondering, with all respect to him, whether it would have filled him with the same unqualified satisfaction if it had been concluded by my noble friend (Lord Kimberley).

Lord STANMORE : Yes.

The EARL OF ROSEBERY : I accept his assurance. I know that he has an impartial mind. (Laughter.) I do not know

whether I am to accept the assurance of the noble lord as to what his attitude would have been, but I must say that it is not such an arrangement as might have been anticipated from the speeches of the present party in power when they were in opposition. We have given up a great deal by that arrangement, and what *quid pro quo* we have received for it we shall hear, no doubt, from the noble marquis when he speaks; but we have not been informed as yet. We have given up the principle of the buffer State. We have given up Mongsin, and the noble lord the mover of the Address thinks little of it. But Mongsin has been occupied by a British force, and when there was the question of the evacuation of Chitral we were told, I think by the First Lord of the Treasury, that the first principle of this Government was that where a British soldier had once been there he must always remain. Thirdly, we have given up the British dominions on the other side of the Mekong river. Fourthly, we have taken the Mekong as our boundary between France and ourselves, in direct disregard of the advice of the principal local authority on that matter. If I might again quote Mr. Curzon, whose defence of this arrangement I shall go to the gallery of the other House to hear, I must state that I remember, when we were in office, he attached a special value to the retention of the dominions on the other side of the Mekong. I am not going to make any remarks on the inferences which I draw from the language of the treaty. I would rather have it explained by the noble marquis; but whatever inferences I may draw from its natural language, I cannot express, for fear any argument should be built upon them in the French Chamber in the discussion that is soon to take place there. But I must honestly say that I think we have a right to some explanation from the Government as to what are the advantages in exchange for which they have given up the four very valuable points to which I have referred. But, tacked on to Siam, were a couple of other quarters of the globe. There is a Commission with regard to our territories on the banks of the Niger. If that Commission does its work well, I for one have no criticism to offer; and, lastly, Tunis is brought in in connexion with that strange arrangement. Our treaty with Tunis is, so far as I can understand the language of the instrument, to be put an end to and to be negotiated afresh—a very important concession as bearing on the interests of Italy as well as ourselves, and one on which I hope we shall have some explanation from the noble marquis.

The Marquis of Salisbury, following Lord Rosebery, said in the course of his speech:—When I come to the Foreign Office matters on which the noble lord was more distinct, the first I must deal with is the Treaty of Siam. The noble lord has told us we have sacrificed some very important things. Amongst others, he made out two bits of territory we had sacrificed instead of one. I think that is a geographical error on his part. There has been nothing given up but this minute portion of Mongsin, which in past times paid tribute to Burma, Siam, and China, and which therefore the French Government claimed as confidently as we. Of course we held that they were absolutely wrong.

The Earl of Rosebery: It is the noble Marquis that is making a geographical mistake. (Laughter.)

The Marquis of Salisbury: We will wait until we get to maps. (Laughter.) But when the noble lord tells me that the treaty has been concluded in defiance of the wishes of the local authorities, I can only say it has been concluded in entire accordance with the recommendations and wishes of the Government of India. It was the wishes and recommendations of the Government of India that largely induced us to conclude this treaty. The danger I wish to guard against—and I hope I can do so without indiscretion—is, I think, very obvious. However anxious the French Government may be to remain at peace, however laudable their conduct may be, there was always a possibility, and more than a possibility, that in these relations with Siam causes of difference would arise, and if those causes of difference had matured in the conflict, and the danger had arisen of the disappearance of the kingdom of Siam, a very formidable question would have been placed before this country. I should not have thought that the noble lord, after his experience of the difficulties attaching to the Siamese negotiations, would have been inclined to treat with contempt that apprehension which it was legitimate to feel with respect to the future of that kingdom. At all events, whatever those apprehensions were, in my judgment they were much more serious than they appear to have been in the mind of the noble lord. Whatever those apprehensions were, they are now at an end, because, by the agreement of the two Powers most interested in the matter, the integral and essential portion, and the most prosperous and fruitful portion, of the Siam kingdom is protected against all possibility of attack. I believe that has removed all chance of serious difference in the future with a great European Power, and in the present state of the world I do not think that it is otherwise than a matter of congratulation. Of course I am quite ready to admit with my noble friend behind me that the treaty is not one in regard to which either Power can at all in any way triumph over the other. On the contrary, I think it is a treaty which both Powers have a right to rejoice in, because it will reserve to each all the rights and privileges to which they have any claim, and at the same time add additional security to their possession and harmonious existence in the future. (Hear, hear.)

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PETITIONS.

Koer, Musst Shyan.—Petition of Musst Shyan Koer, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table.

Khan, Sulaimon.—Petition of Sulaimon Khan, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table.

Singh, Bhaj.—Petition of Bhaj Singh, for enquiry into his case; to lie upon the Table.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

East India (Warlike Operations: Killed and Wounded). Return presented relative thereto [Address 5th March, 1895; Mr. Alpheus Morton]; to lie upon the Table.

East India (Kythal). Return presented relative thereto [Address 22nd August, 1895; Mr. Kimber]; to lie upon the Table.

East India (Loans raised in England). Copy presented of Return of all Loans raised in England, chargeable on the Revenues of India, outstanding at the commencement of the half-year ending on the 30th September, 1895, etc., [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

East India (Loans raised in India). Copy presented of Return of all Loans raised in India, chargeable on the Revenues of India, outstanding at the commencement of the half-year ending on the 30th September, 1895, etc., [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

India Office. Copy presented of Order in Council, dated 12th December, 1895, approving a Statement of a revised appointment and alteration of salary in the Establishment of the Secretary of State for India in Council [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

THE ADDRESS.

CHITRAL AND SIAM.

Mr. G. J. Goschen, Jun., moving the Address in answer to the gracious Speech from the Throne, said in the course of his speech: The campaigns of Ashanti and Chitral have one strong point of resemblance, for, although the latter was not of the same peaceful character as the former, yet its success was largely due to the perfection of organisation, of which the Government of India are so proud. It is our pride and boast that ours is an island home, but it is not only its shores that we have to protect. We have to protect other frontiers, and it is the watching and guarding of those frontiers which occasionally involves us in disputes. It is with much satisfaction we learn that the controversies with regard to the delimitation of our frontiers in the East had a successful issue. This issue has not been due to a diplomatic triumph of one country over another, but it is rather the outcome of a friendly agreement between the Powers, and therefore, I venture to think, the more likely to prove firm and lasting.

Mr. R. McKenna said he would not have ventured to intervene except in the hope of obtaining information from the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who in a previous debate had described himself as having peculiar means of knowledge of affairs in Siam. This information might now assist him in understanding the apparent complete change in policy in regard to Anglo-French relations with Siam. In 1893 the Under Secretary had laid it down that "the main British interest in Siam is the political stability of Siam itself." He was aware

that the hon. gentleman would allege that this stability was secured by the treaty. But on another occasion the hon. gentleman had used language which condemned in advance such stability as the treaty secured. He said: "Attention is called to the Provinces of Battambong and Angkor. . . . . They are rich in rice and other produce, and include the upper part of the Great Lake, with its important and lucrative fisheries. . . . . The possession of the Provinces is essential to Siam; and, in fact, the independence and integrity of Siam will be irretrievably injured if those Provinces are allowed to pass into the hands of any foreign Power." The treaty which was supposed to guarantee the integrity and independence of Siam did not include these very provinces within its scope, and in consequence the situation which the Under Secretary then described existed at the present moment. For, in the same speech, the hon. gentleman said: "These Provinces have not been seized by the French, but let me explain the ingenious substitution for seizure which is substituted." The pith of that "ingenious substitution for seizure" was the occupation of Chantaboon, which the French still occupied at the present moment. He would not speak of the surrender of territory undeniably British on the upper reaches of the Mekong, but he would ask what compensation Great Britain received for the sacrifice of what the Under Secretary had described as the main British interest in Siam.

Sir Charles Dilke said, in the course of his speech: He now came to a point on which he took the sharpest issue with the policy of the Government. He could not imagine a statement more untruthful, as it seemed to him, than that contained in what was virtually the first paragraph of the Speech. It was said: "An agreement has been concluded between my Government and that of the French Republic, having for its principal object the more secure establishment of the independence of the Kingdom of Siam." What was the policy which the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs last year recommended to the House, and which was supported by the whole authority of the Conservative Party? It was the integrity of the whole country of Siam, of all that was left, as he said, after the treaty which had been made between France and Siam. The hon. gentleman specifically mentioned two provinces as being portions of the country the integrity of which ought to be preserved. He believed the Government were going to tell them that the integrity of Siam was preserved by the treaty they had made, but every man smiled at that statement. Everyone knew that at the time the treaty was negotiated between France and Siam, and when we intervened, the Siamese objected to two articles the French pressed upon them. The hon. gentleman told them that Chantabon was a port, the integrity of which should be maintained on account of the large British trade there. It was well known that what had been done was to guarantee the centre of Siam, and not to guarantee the remainder of the country, which seemed to him a direct invitation to other people to annex it. ("No.") What was the consideration this country had got for a surrender which, to judge from the language Lord Rosebery used, was a surrender of a very important branch of British trade? Was it coming to a full and fair arrangement with France which might relieve us from those anxieties in the world which bad arrangements with France undoubtedly occasioned us, when there was a handing over of our influence over the Siamese part of the Malay Peninsula? The Convention contained a clause about Tunis. We had certain trade rights with Tunis. Those rights gave us very low duties, and through them we did a very large trade. It was well known that the French Protectionists desired to hamper that trade for the supposed benefit of the trade of France. There was a clause in the Siamese Convention by which we seemed to go out of our way to promise to discuss with the French our relations with Tunis, from which the French understood we were prepared to give up our rights there. He feared the whole history of Lord Salisbury's conventions with France and Germany went to show that, in regard to what the noble lord considered smaller and secondary questions, he did not sufficiently study the interests of British trade. He complained that the concessions which were made in the name of British trade were useless concessions, because they did not deal with those larger questions which the French had in view, and did not produce that complete friendly relation throughout the world which we had a right to anticipate if we made the concessions at all. They fell short or they went too far—the former for the purposes of a complete settlement, and the latter for the interests of British trade. The question which lay behind all these others was the question of the occupation of Egypt. (Hear, hear.) Everybody knew that some believed that this country had not kept her word with regard to Egypt, and others believed that the letter of that word had been rigidly kept; but all knew what the opinion in France was on the point. Some, and the number was increasing even on the Ministerial side of the House, believed with him that, from a military point of view, the occupation of Egypt was a weakness and not a strength. The question of the occupation must be settled to bring about really friendly relations with France, if it were not too late altogether to restore those relations. But that was no reason why, in the interests of British trade, protests should not be made against conventions which gave up important trade interests, and particularly against the hypocrisy of such language as that in the Queen's Speech stating that the object of the agreement had been to secure the greater independence of Siam. (Hear, hear.)

February 13th.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PETITIONS FOR SIMULTANEOUS EXAMINATIONS.

Civil Service of India.—Petitions for open competitive examinations simultaneously in England and India, from Gorakpur, Mysore, Vayalpad, Sholapur, Madras, Rayapuram, Virapandi, Pudukota, and Ramanasanmithurum; to lie upon the Table.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

East India (Loans raised in England). Paper (presented 11th February) to be printed. [No. 14.)

East India (Loans raised in India). Paper (presented 11th February) to be printed. (No. 15.)

East India (Examinations for the Civil Service). Copy presented of Regulations for the open competition of August, 1896 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

AFGHANISTAN AND THE KAFIRS.

Sir John Kennaway asked the Secretary of State for India, whether Her Majesty's Government had received confirmation of a statement made in several Indian newspapers, to the effect that, according to an announcement by the Afghan Commander-in-Chief, military operations would be resumed by the Afghans against the Kafirs of the Hindu Kush in the first week of March;

Whether the extirpation or enslavement of the Kafir race was contemplated as a possible contingency when the transfer to Afghanistan of the whole of the Kafir country up to Chitral was made under the Durand Agreement, as stated in the recently published Chitral Blue-book; and, if so, what steps were being taken to save the people from such a fate;

And, whether the text of the Durand Agreement or Treaty would be laid before the House of Commons.

Lord G. Hamilton: (1) Her Majesty's Government has received no confirmation of the report that military operations will be resumed against the Kafirs in March. The latest report is that operations were practically ended on January 24th, troops withdrawn, and most hostages released.

(2) The main object of the Durand Agreement—the text of which I shall be glad to lay on the Table of the House—was to fix the limits of the respective spheres of influence of the two Governments, and thus put an end to the difficulties arising from the want of such a delimitation. According to the latest reports received from the Government of India no question of "the extirpation or enslavement of the Kafir race" has arisen; and certainly no such contingency was contemplated at the time the arrangement was arrived at.

THE SIAM AGREEMENT.

Mr. Gibson Bowles asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he could state why the agreement between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of France, relative to Siam and to Tunis, dated the 15th January, 1896, as published in the French Yellow Book, was put in the form and under the title of a Declaration:

And, whether that form and title implied any difference between its permanent binding force and that of a Convention.

Mr. Curzon: The agreement is entitled a Declaration in

accordance with precedent; for instance, the agreement between Great Britain and France of August 5th, 1890, relative to territories in Africa. There is no difference whatever between its permanent binding force and that of a Convention.

THE TRANSVAAL QUESTION AND THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

Mr. Arnold Forster seconded Mr. Labouchere's amendment to the Address as follows: "And we humbly represent to your Majesty that no investigation into recent occurrences in South Africa will be complete unless it extends to the financial and political action of the Chartered Company of South Africa, since your Majesty granted to certain persons the original charter under which the Company is incorporated."

In the course of his speech Mr. Arnold Forster said: What was the real and true objection, not only to this chartered company, but to every chartered company? That they were mixing up totally dissimilar things—things not only dissimilar, but which ought on every principle of ethics and good sense to be eternally dissociated—the right to govern men and the desire to make money. (Hear, hear.) They were told that the love of money was the root of all evil, yet they had deliberately, by the constitution of this company, made the love of money the prevailing motive of every officer of the company. He did not find fault with any corporation formed to make money. We were all money-hunters in one sense or other. Some succeeded, others failed. Some hunted for money honestly, others dishonestly, and brought themselves within the pale of the criminal law. The House had divested itself of its prerogative—the government of Her Majesty's subjects—and placed it in the hands of these people, whose reason for existence was to make money. So it was incumbent upon them to see how this power was used or abused. The experiment of chartering such companies had been tried over and over again, and had failed. Lord Clive—the greatest man we ever sent to India—found there were conditions in regard to the East India company which made good government impossible. Lord Clive spent the best years of his life resisting the corruption resulting from private trading on the part of officials of the company. The charter was neglected, and the people of India suffered injury and injustice in consequence. He might be told that during the last thirty or forty years of its existence the East India was without blemish or blame. That was when it ceased to be a monopolist trading company, and became a department of the Government of the country, with a Civil Service similar to that which governed the empire at the present time.

Later in his speech, Mr. Arnold Forster added: The whole situation, to his mind, was an absolutely false one. Their Imperial rule had been sometimes a mischievous one; on the whole he believed it to be a good and judicious one. But what was the good thing they had got out of it all? It was that wherever the English Government had gone it had taken with it the traditions of honourable fair dealing and honesty. (Hear, hear.) Their Indian Civil Service was a great example of this, for, however poor and obscure one of its members might be, the wealth of India would not buy him, or any pecuniary consideration make him swerve from his loyalty to the service of this country; or, if he did, his own profession would cut him, and his career would be ruined and blasted. (Hear, hear.) But who were the officers, magistrates, colonels, captains, and Heaven knew what, of the chartered company? They were all honourable men he had no doubt, but they were not under Imperial control like their Indian Civil servants, and the moment they resigned neither the chartered company nor those who cared for the empire had any authority over them, and they might gasconade in some other part of the world the very next month. (Hear, hear.) That was not the sort of material out of which they had built up or could safely conduct their empire. (Hear, hear.)

February 14th.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

BRITISH INDIANS IN THE TRANSVAAL.

Mr. Bhownaggree asked the Secretary of State for the Colonies, whether his attention had been drawn to the fact that the British Indian subjects of Her Majesty residing in South Africa had hitherto been treated differently to the rest of Her Majesty's subjects with regard to certain rights and privileges:

And, whether he would take steps in future arrangements with the Government of the South African Republic to secure to British Indian subjects in that region the same treatment as was extended to all other British subjects.

Mr. Chamberlain: I am aware of the facts and will not lose sight of the subject. As regards the Commandeering Treaty, the hon. member has been already informed that steps have been taken to prevent the introduction of a colour distinction. As regards the restriction on trading and domicile our hands are not so free, owing to the result of the arbitration which leaves the matter in the hands of the Transvaal Courts. But I have undertaken to use any influence I may possess in order to secure fair treatment of all our fellow-subjects irrespective of colour.

THE ADDRESS.

THE TRANSVAAL AND THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

Sir W. Harcourt, in the course of his speech on Mr. Labouchere's amendment to the Address, said:—The relation of this country to companies which, as the right hon. gentleman (Mr. Chamberlain) said, are not able or are not willing to control their agents is one that must be decided by this House, because we are responsible to the nation for the conduct of such companies. The right hon. gentleman has declared his approval of the system of chartered companies; I reserve my own opinion, for I think there is a great deal to be said on both sides; but everybody is agreed that the conditions of the South Africa Company's Charter must be changed; indeed, the right hon. gentleman has changed them himself; and, therefore, the conditions under which chartered companies are to be founded in the future obviously form a question to be inquired into by Parliament. Our predecessors took that view. In the great controversy of the end of last century with reference to the East India Company, when the party of Fox on one side and the party of Pitt on the other took different views as to our dealings with the East India Company, everybody was agreed that Parliament should decide what was to be the relation of the Empire to the East India Company. There was a great discussion, and there was a great report by Dundas and others, which are monumental records among the journals of this House, and upon them was founded the system of that Board of Control which was erected for the express purpose of restraining the action of the Chartered Company in Hindustan. Since that time there have been a great many Indian Committees; the matter has been gone into over and over again; and we should entirely fail in the duty imposed upon us, in the situation in which we find ourselves, if we did not claim and insist upon the right of Parliament to decide a great Imperial question.

February 17th.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE SIAM AGREEMENT.

Mr. M'Kenna asked the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether his attention had been called to the concluding words in the communication of M. Berthelot to M. Guieysse, contained in the recently issued French Yellow-book relating to the affairs of Siam and the Upper Mekong, in which he alluded to the execution of the treaty of October 3rd, 1893, as remaining incomplete; and whether he had any information as to the particulars in respect of which the said treaty was alleged to be still incomplete.

Mr. Curzon: I have seen the words in question. The particulars referred to are understood to relate to the provisions connected with the 25 kilomètre zone.

FIELD HOWITZERS.

Mr. Arnold Forster asked the Under Secretary of State for War whether his attention had been called to the fact that, while the Indian Government had decided to commence the manufacture of a new field howitzer for land service with a calibre of 5·4 inches, the War Office had simultaneously

sanctioned the manufacture of a field howitzer for the use of the Home and Colonial Army with a calibre of 5·0 or 5·2 inches;

Whether he was aware that the ammunition, limber cases, and ammunition waggons for the respective guns referred to were not interchangeable;

Whether he would give the House an assurance that immediate steps would be taken to reconcile the difference between the India and Home Departments, and thus avoid the confusion which must arise from the simultaneous adoption of the two guns;

And, whether he would state whether any person was responsible for securing uniformity of pattern in essential matters between the armament and equipments of the Indian and the Home armies respectively, and what was the name of, and the office held by, such person.

Mr. BRODRICK: An application was made in 1889 by the Government of India for a howitzer to throw a 60lb. shell. It was found that for such a shell a 5·4 calibre was necessary. The howitzer supplied for the Home and Colonial army is a 5 in. howitzer throwing a 50lb. shell, and the ammunition and equipment are not interchangeable. The Indian Government required a special type of howitzer to form part of a siege train drawn by bullocks intended for shelling stone or mud forts, while the howitzer used for the Home and Colonial army is required for field batteries and has necessarily to be light and drawn by horses. The two guns are intended for different purposes, and it is anticipated that for use with field batteries the Indian Government will adopt the 5 in. howitzer. The Secretary of State is strongly of opinion that the multiplication of calibres is undesirable; and care will be taken to make all arms and ammunition, whether for use at home or elsewhere, interchangeable except in cases when for local reasons a difference is inevitable. The Government of India is represented on the Ordnance Committee by whom new patterns of weapons are examined. In cases where the War Department and the India Office are unable to agree the Defence Committee of the Cabinet will be asked to decide.

Mr. ARNOLD FORSTER asked if he was to understand that the manufacture of these dissimilar guns was to be continued.

Mr. BRODRICK said the manufacture of these arms commenced early in 1894. The guns were ready for issue and it was impossible to stop them.

PRISON-MADE GOODS.

Mr. J. H. DALZIEL asked the President of the Board of Trade whether any reply had been received to the representations made to foreign Governments in respect to prison-made goods; and what action, if any, the Government proposed to take in the matter?

Mr. RITCHIE: The replies received from foreign Governments, while sympathetic, do not lead Her Majesty's Government to hope that it will be possible at present to bring about an agreement for common action in the matter. Under these circumstances, the Government consider that, in view of the Resolution unanimously passed by the House of Commons on February 19 last, Parliament should have the opportunity of giving legislative effect to that Resolution. My hon. and gallant friend the member for Central Sheffield has, I observed, introduced a Bill with that object. I hope the opportunity desired may be afforded by that Bill.

Mr. DALZIEL asked whether the right hon. gentlemen could lay upon the Table the correspondence which had passed on the subject?

Mr. LOUGH asked whether a Report from the Indian Government had been received with regard to the carpets manufactured in Indian prisons and their distribution in foreign countries. He would also like to know what action he proposed to take in that matter.

Mr. RITCHIE: I do not myself see the slightest objection to laying the correspondence on the Table; but I will enquire about it. I may say, in reply to the hon. member for Islington, that we have received a reply from the Indian Government, and the effect of the reply is that they see no objection to the proposed legislation. (Cheers.)

Mr. LOUGH: Will those papers be published with the others?

Mr. RITCHIE: I will enquire.

THE ADDRESS.
SIR W. WEDDERBURN'S AMENDMENT.
THE RETENTION OF CHITRAL.
"A GRIEVOUS BREACH OF NATIONAL GOOD FAITH."

Sir W. WEDDERBURN moved, as an amendment to the Address, to add the following words at the end: "But we humbly express our regret that the present Government, reversing the policy of their predecessors, have decided not to withdraw from Chitral, thereby violating the pledge expressly given in the Viceroy's proclamation, dangerously adding to Government responsibilities beyond the North-West frontier of India and inevitably leading to an increase of the overgrown expenditure in the Indian Military Department, and further our regret that the Treaty of 1893 with the Amir of Afghanistan has not been placed before Parliament." The hon. baronet said that in the Queen's Speech reference had been made to Chitral in terms expressing approval of the permanent occupation of that territory. He could not allow that to pass without a protest and an appeal to the national conscience against a grievous breach of the national good faith. It might be objected that it was now too late for protest or appeal, but in certain matters it was never too late to mend—it was never too late to remove a blot from the good name of the nation. Some people seemed to think that it was never the right time for Parliament to exercise its duty of control over these frontier aggressions on our weaker neighbours. While the plans were being laid there was profound secrecy, and no one knew anything about them; when the explosion took place we were told it was a crisis, and we must not embarrass the Government; and when Naboth was killed and his vineyard permanently occupied, we were told that it was too late, and no use crying over spilt milk. That might be true; but at any rate, we should do our best to prevent other milk being spilt in the same way. But, as a matter of fact, in the present case circumstances had changed since the decision was come to, and there were reasons to reconsider it. The reasons were contained in the Queen's Speech, which announced that the delimitation of the boundary with Russia had been agreed upon. He congratulated Her Majesty's Government on having accomplished this settlement of the spheres of influence. But this matter being settled in a friendly way, fussy activity on our side of the frontier was no longer called for. It was only likely to act as a challenge to Russia, and stimulate her to forward movements. It had repeatedly been alleged in the Anglo-Indian Press that the real object of the Chitral expedition was to show, with reference to the delimitation negotiations with Russia, that we exercised effective control over Chitral, so that it came within our sphere of influence. If so, these negotiations being now concluded, the retention of Chitral was no longer necessary. He also hoped his right hon. friend the Secretary of State for India would explain in what sense the term "Indian Empire" was used in the Queen's Speech with regard to this delimitation. Did it mean that the Government intended to incorporate all these vast mountainous regions, up to the Pamir boundary, in the Indian dominions vested in Her Majesty by the Government of India Act of 1858? This was a question of the greatest financial importance. If it was intended to annex these territories to India, the proper legal steps should be taken, and he desired to know what those steps would be. If the territories were not part of India, the cost of the Chitral expedition must be borne by the Imperial exchequer, unless the assent of both Houses of Parliament was obtained under section 55 of the Act. The grounds of his protest against the retention of Chitral were threefold: 1st. We had broken our pledges to the border tribes; 2nd. The retention was politically dangerous; and 3rd. The cost would be ruinous to the Indian people. In the Queen's Speech the border tribes were congratulated on the loyalty with which they had carried out their engagements. It was a great pity we had not shown a similar loyalty. It seemed a case of *sic vos non vobis*. We no doubt appreciated the advantage of other people keeping their promises to us. But if an ounce of example was better than a pound of precept, it was better than a hundredweight of commendation coming from those who were themselves defaulters. Had anyone any real doubt as to the meaning of Lord Elgin's proclamation? Was the declared object of the

expedition to rescue Dr. Robertson and then retire? Or was it to seize a military post and remain there? The circumstances showed what the meaning was. Our people at Chitral were caught in a trap, 180 miles beyond our frontier. To reach them we had to pass through a mountainous wilderness with rapid torrents, deep defiles, and snowy passes. Without the permission of the tribes we could not get through in time. Accordingly, the following Proclamation was issued: "The sole object of the Government of India is to put an end to the present and prevent any future unlawful aggression on Chitral territory, and as soon as this object has been attained the force will be withdrawn. The Government of India have no intention of permanently occupying any territory through which Umra Khan's misconduct may now force them to pass, or of interfering with the independence of the tribes." Mark the words, "sole object." Nothing is said about roads or valuable military positions. The clear meaning was that we would rescue our people, and then withdraw. He recognised no difference as regards moral principles in public and in private concerns. If he thought a thing wrong to do it alone, it would be wrong if he did it jointly with 30 others, or 30 millions of others. How should we view such a promise if given by an individual? Supposing his house was on fire, and one of his family was in danger of being burnt; and supposing he could not reach this child except by passing though the house of a neighbour, a suspicious man who kept his doors bolted and barred. What would be thought of the man who got permission to pass through his neighbour's house by the promise that he would go back at once, who rescued his child, and then told his neighbour that he meant to stay there, because his prestige, his sense of honour, made it impossible for him to retire when he had once come there? The case was on all fours with that of Chitral. If there was any doubt about the meaning of the Proclamation, let it be submitted to the arbitration of any impartial authority. The right hon. the leader of the House had recommended general arbitration. It was easy to accept arbitration with strong opponents, but it would be more meritorious to accept it with the weak and helpless. Secondly, the permanent occupation of Chitral was dangerous and inexpedient. It was folly to pierce the natural ramparts by which the North-Western frontier was defended, to kill the brave defenders, and to pave the way for a Russian invasion. Also the sheet anchor of our power in India was trust in our good faith, and this trust had now received a grievous blow. Thirdly, the ultimate cost to the people of India would be ruinous. The people of India were miserably poor, and already much over-taxed. No doubt the noble lord would assure the House that the cost would not be great. Such official assurances were made in the Afghan war, which was estimated to cost $1\frac{3}{4}$ millions, but which cost 21 millions; and in the Abyssinian war which was estimated at 3 millions, and cost 10. He warned the noble lord that in permanently occupying such territories the first steps were the easiest and the cheapest—afterwards came the dangers, the difficulties and the heavy expenditure. He reminded him how Lord Roberts had estimated the fighting population of these mountain regions at a quarter of a million of men, mostly well armed, brave, and with an unconquerable love of independence. These men still occupied the wild regions along the Peshawar-Chitral road, and much money would be needed to coerce or bribe them to accept our presence in their country. As regards the Treaty with the Amír he was glad to hear that the noble lord was willing to lay the text on the Table of the House, but it had not yet been produced. So far as they knew about it, it provided two things: first, to increase by 60 lakhs a year the subsidy paid to the Amír by the unfortunate people of India, and second, to hand over Kafiristan to the Amír. If the subsidy were used to improve the condition of the people of Afghanistan, there would be something to show for it, but he believed that it was chiefly employed to provide arms of precision, and the British nation incurred a responsibility as regarded the use of these arms. At present it was alleged that they were being employed in crushing the Kafirs, a brave and interesting race, and in reviving a local slave trade in the most odious form. This forward frontier policy, this system of aggression on our weaker neighbours, involved the country in dangerous and discreditable transactions, and was absolutely opposed to the policy laid down by Her Gracious Majesty when she assumed direct charge of India, and in her Proclamation of 1858 declared, "We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions and while we will permit no aggression upon our dominions or our rights to be attempted with impunity we shall sanction no encroachment on those of others."

Mr. Schwann seconded the Amendment. He did not see how it was possible for Her Majesty's Government to find any loophole as an excuse for remaining in the territories that they had promised to retire from. Moreover, the whole system of pushing our borders in India was a source of great expense to the revenues of India. The people of India were very poor, their annual income was very small, and their daily earnings were infinitesimal. In order to deal with the difficulties of the finance of India, it had been necessary, as they knew, to place duties on the products of the place he had the honour to represent, and of a large number of manufacturing places in Lancashire and elsewhere. For these reasons, and the more admirable ones given by his hon. friend, he had great pleasure in seconding the motion.

LORD G. HAMILTON'S REPLY.

Lord George Hamilton said the House would recollect that this question of the occupation or the evacuation of Chitral was discussed at some length some time ago, when, by a large majority, approval was expressed of reversing the policy of leaving Chitral. Both the front Opposition bench and other members held that the occupation of Chitral would entail very heavy expenditure, that it would be repugnant to the feelings of the people, and would not tend to promote peace with Russia. Although they did not wish to deny that there was a certain amount of risk, as there always must be in a movement of this kind, they believed it was a danger they ought to face, and face boldly. The most sanguine anticipations that any one could have indulged in had been more than realised. (Hear, hear.) So far from their occupation being regarded in a hostile spirit by the people of the country, on the contrary, they welcomed the English occupation, because it had inaugurated a period of security which they had not known before. (Hear, hear.) Reference had been made to slavery, but before they went there perhaps the very worst form of slavery prevailed. The result of their occupation was that the slave trade had ceased. Before they went there women of the poorer class were abducted; and so far as Chitral was concerned, during the few months they had occupied it that occupation, he believed, had given almost universal satisfaction. Then, Chitral was a much richer country than was anticipated. Irrigation works hundreds of years old were found, and the facilities were such as to enable them to supply the large amount of food necessary for maintaining the garrison. So far, therefore, as Chitral was concerned, the occupation had been an unmixed success. The hon. member went on to say that Indian finance would not carry this expenditure. He thought the expenditure would be less than was anticipated, and, so far from Indian finance being in a critical condition, they must bear in mind that there had been a considerable remission of taxation by the reduction in the cotton duties. He thought they would find, as he stated, last year, that, notwithstanding the Chitral expedition, the equalisation of income and expenditure would be equitably realised. What did the hon. gentleman want them to do? He wanted them to retire from Chitral, and hand it over to anarchy. They could not do that. They were bound within their sphere to prevent disorder, and, if they did not preserve law and order, would that not be an invitation to some other country to come in and perform the duties which they had abdicated? Then the hon. member went on to say that the occupation of Chitral gave offence to Russia. That was a statement and a policy against which he uttered a strong protest. Those who advocated it put into the mouths of foreign Powers and peoples arguments and ideas which neither these Governments nor these peoples would ever have thought of. (Cheers.) Why should Russia object to the occupation of Chitral? Russia had honourably fulfilled every engagement into which she had entered so far as the Indian empire was concerned, and she would no more think of interfering with Chitral than of interfering with any other territory on the English side of the line. He, therefore, objected to that being attributed to Russia which the Russian Government never thought of. Then they were reminded of the country intervening between Chitral and Peshawar. The Government had succeeded in making an excellent road from Peshawar to Chitral, and the tribes through whose territory it had passed had of their own accord undertaken to protect it. The result was that commerce had largely

increased. The number of animals and caravans passing through that country had immensely increased, and, moreover, the country was by no means so poor as was supposed. On the contrary, it was evident that many hundreds of years ago it was much more thickly populated than it was now, and there were many signs of returning prosperity. It was, therefore, in the interest both of the intervening tribes as well as of the Chitralis that the policy this House maintained last year should in no sense be disturbed. (Hear, hear.) The proposer of the amendment had accused the Government deliberately of a breach of faith. Was the hon. gentleman acquainted with the facts of the case? It was perfectly clear, from his speech, that neither he nor the seconder of the amendment had mastered the rudiments of the question. (Cheers.) The hon. gentleman said there had been a breach of faith, and that the terms of the Proclamation had not been complied with. That Proclamation was issued by the Indian Government. The Indian Government from first to last said they had adhered to every letter of that Proclamation. The Proclamation was issued to the tribes who lived between the territory of Chitral and Peshawar. Did these tribes say the Proclamation had not been adhered to? Could the hon. gentleman quote any fact in support of such a statement?

Mr. SCHWANN: In the journals.

Lord G. HAMILTON: Which journals?

Mr. SCHWANN: Perhaps the newspapers.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I have asked the hon. member for his authority for the serious charge which he has advanced against the Indian Government, and he says, perhaps the newspapers would give me some. (Laughter.)

Mr. SCHWANN: I said that humorously. (Laughter.)

Lord G. HAMILTON said that perhaps the hon. gentleman did not quite realise that that was not a place for humorous amusement. For a member of Parliament to advance against the Indian Government a charge of breach of faith was not a humourous performance. (Cheers.) He assured both the mover and seconder of the Amendment that they were absolutely wrong, and that they did not understand in the least to whom the Proclamation was issued or what its object was. The Proclamation was issued to all the people of Swat and the people of the adjacent territory who did not side with Umra Khan, and Umra Khan was the person against whom we were fighting. The Proclamation merely applied to the territory between Peshawar and Chitral, and it had absolutely nothing to do with the people of Chitral, because our suzerainty and authority were already there asserted. What the Indian Government undertook was that, if they were not opposed in passing through the intervening territory, they would not occupy that territory, or in any way interfere with the independence of people through whose country they were passing. Did either of the hon. gentlemen mean to say that the independence of the tribes had been interfered with or their territory occupied? Did they mean to say that any chief of any tribe, or any considerable number of any tribe, had protested against the action of the Indian Government? He would tell the hon. gentlemen exactly what had occurred. There had been a difference between the Indian Government and the tribes as regarded the Proclamation, but only in one sense. The heads of the tribes petitioned the Political Officer asking to be incorporated in British territory. (Laughter and cheers.) They said they had felt such advantage and sense of security from the presence of the troops, and no doubt from the better prices they got for their produce, that they thought they would like to have these benefits permanently. They were told it was impossible they could be so incorporated. Then they wished to go on a mission to the Viceroy at Simla, in order that he might reconsider the decision which had just been conveyed to them. (Hear, hear.) Therefore, he hoped the House would hear no more of charges of bad faith. (Cheers.) The fact was that, unfortunately, the occupation or evacuation of Chitral got into the arena of party conflict at the commencement of the General Election. So soon as that question came to be discussed on its merits it was clear that the case of the present Government as against the late Government was an overwhelmingly strong one; and, therefore, when all the tangible arguments in reference to occupation were annihilated, the supporters of the late Government fell back on breach of faith. It was a pure concoction from beginning to end. There was not a word of truth in it. (Cheers.) It was not based on one iota of fact. He thought that hon. gentlemen opposite ought to reflect that the Viceroy of India, a high-minded gentleman, was a member of their own party. It was not creditable to English politics that they should bring this charge of want of honour and breach of faith against a member of their own party, who was carrying out a policy which he believed to be consistent with national and Imperial interests. (Cheers.) The result, therefore, of our occupation had been pre-eminently satisfactory, and gentlemen opposite who belonged to the Radical, or Progressive, party, as it was now called, could hardly realise what they were asking the House to do. There was an excellent road made through a country which had previously been unapproachable, which road had led to a large increase of commerce and trade. There were a number of rivers traversed by excellent bridges, and he was informed that parts of the road were as good as an English turnpike road. The road had daily been improved; it had been watched and guarded by local levies, who were paid; and trade was greatly increasing all along the route. Why, now, in the name of common sense, were we to retire and break up this road? Hon. gentlemen appeared not in the position of reformers, but of vandals. (Hear, hear.) Before sitting down he congratulated his friends behind him that the first time they had to give a party vote last year they were actuated by true political instincts when, by an overwhelming majority, they assented to this forward movement. He believed there had been no forward movement in recent years made by any Government which had been more beneficial to all concerned, and which would tend to put an end to those periodical disturbances and outbreaks of fanaticism and terrorism which had characterised that portion of Her Majesty's dominions. (Cheers.)

Question put, "That those words be there added."

The House divided: Ayes, 79; Noes, 193.

February 18th.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PRISON MORTALITY IN INDIA.

Mr. SAMUEL SMITH asked the Secretary of State for India whether he would press upon the Indian Government the need for increased endeavours to diminish the still continuing excessive mortality in some of the prisons, especially in Bengal, where it appeared by an official report, dated Calcutta, June 8th, 1895, that in four of the Bengal gaols there were, during the year 1894, more than 100 deaths per 1,000 prisoners, namely, 239 per mille at Chaibass, 144 at Naya Dunka, 129 at Daltonganz, and 118 at Balasore?

Mr. HANBURY: The resolution to which the hon. member refers shows that the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal is fully alive to his responsibility, and is doing all that lies in his power to prevent a recurrence of the exceptionally high mortality in the four gaols which have been mentioned, the actual number of deaths in which were 29, 9, 5, and 14 respectively, and this mortality was largely due to an outbreak of cholera. This being so, I do not think it necessary to call the attention of the Government of India to the subject, but I will ask for copies of the reports of the committees which have been appointed to investigate the causes of the recent mortality at Chaibass and Balasore.

THE SIAM AGREEMENT.

Mr. T. R. BUCHANAN asked the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he would lay upon the Table papers and correspondence relating to the agreement respecting Siam recently concluded with France, and would include in them the communications on the subject with the Government of India.

Mr. CURZON: It is proposed to lay on the Table papers and correspondence relating to the recent agreement with regard to Siam.

Mr. E. H. PICKERSGILL asked whether the right hon. gentleman would include a copy of the convention between China and France of the 20th of June, 1895, which was material to the appreciation of the agreement between France and this country.

Mr. CURZON: May I ask hon. friends that where it is possible to help me to give them a proper reply, they would at least give me one day's notice of their questions? (Hear, hear.)

Mr. PICKERSGILL asked whether the right hon. gentleman was not aware that the new agreement between France and this country referred specifically to a convention which was made between China and France on the 20th of June, 1895. It was impossible to appreciate the effect of the agreement without having a copy of that convention.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES: Is the right hon. gentleman not aware that the papers have already been laid before the French Parliament in the form of a Yellow-book, and that they might be quoted from?

Mr. CURZON: No, Sir, I am not aware of it, because it is not a fact. The papers laid before the French Parliament in the form of a Yellow-book are the same papers that have already been published in this country, and they will shortly appear in the shape of a Declaration agreed upon by the two Governments, with the addition of a letter from the Foreign Minister of France to the French Minister for the Colonies. This letter corresponds with a letter from Lord Salisbury to the Marquis of Dufferin.

Mr. GIBSON BOWLES asked whether it was not a fact that the agreement had been published in France in the form of a Yellow-book.

Mr. CURZON said that was so, but what he said was that no correspondence connected with the agreement had been presented.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked whether the right hon. gentleman could lay on the Table the correspondence between the Home and Indian Governments, as Lord Salisbury had stated in the House of Lords that the Government of India had given its assent to the arrangement that had been made.

Mr. CURZON said it was not usual to lay on the Table of the House such correspondence as that referred to between the two Governments. He hoped, however, to have an opportunity of speaking about this agreement, and he should then be ready to give the hon. member and the House all information possible as to the attitude of the Indian Government on the matter.

Mr. PICKERSGILL asked what objection there was to laying a copy of the convention on the Table of the House.

Mr. CURZON said there was no objection whatever to doing so, and it would shortly appear before the House in the Treaty Series.

February 20th.

HOUSE OF LORDS.

APPEAL COURT OF BENGAL.

Lord STANLEY OF ALDERLEY had the following question on the paper: To ask the Under Secretary of State for India what steps have been taken to bring the practice of the Appeal Court of Bengal into harmony with the law and the practice of the Appeal Court of the Madras Presidency, by directing the Appeal Court of Bengal to communicate to a lower court the fact of its having reversed a sentence of the lower court, so as to prevent the abuse now existing in cases of persons who have been subject to a criminal charge, and fined by a lower court, and who have obtained a reversal of such sentence from the Appeal Court, of being subjected to some months' delay, and to the payment of additional stamps, in order to recover the amount of fines wrongfully paid by them. He said that he had reason to believe that the ground of the complaint to which the question referred had now been removed. He desired to tender his thanks to the present Secretary of State for India and his predecessor for the steps which they had taken in the matter.

The EARL OF ONSLOW: I am not aware what authority the noble lord has for the suggestion that the practice of the High Court of Bengal is not in harmony with the law. I believe it to be a universal rule throughout India that all orders passed in appeal shall be forthwith certified to the court below. When, therefore, the refund of a fine has been ordered, there ought to be no difficulty in obtaining repayment from the Treasury. Instructions were sent to India some time ago to make enquiries as to the practice obtaining in the various provinces, and to pass such orders as might be found necessary to secure prompt relief in such cases. The Government of India issued a circular on the subject in June last, and the Secretary of State expects to receive their final report shortly.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE INDIAN COTTON DUTIES.

Sir JOSEPH LEESE asked the Secretary of State for India, whether he could state the number, or approximate number, of hand-loom weavers in India:

And, when he proposed to lay upon the Table of the House the Correspondence which had taken place with the Government of India on the Cotton Duties since the last Papers were laid upon the Table.

Lord G. HAMILTON: I have no returns of the precise number of hand-loom weavers in India. The Census of 1891 showed for all India including Native States 1,873,980 households of the weaver caste. This is a large reduction as compared with the previous return of 1881. This evidence of the falling off in the hand industry is confirmed by the fact that of recent years the weaving mills of India have steadily increased their out-turn, while the area of cotton cultivation has remained stationary.

As soon as I receive copies of the recent Acts and the discussions thereon I shall be glad to lay papers on the Table.

THE INDIAN MINTS.

Sir W. HOULDSWORTH asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether Her Majesty's Government had refused to co-operate with Germany in furthering an international monetary agreement by reopening the mints in India.

Mr. BALFOUR: In answer to my hon. friend I have to say there is no truth in the report mentioned by him. The Government of this country has not been approached by Germany on the subject of an international monetary agreement. We should be willing to consider, in conjunction with the Indian Government, the reopening of the mints in India if such a measure could be made part of a satisfactory scheme of currency reform.

KAFIRISTAN.

Sir ELLIS ASHMEAD-BARTLETT asked the Secretary of State for India whether he could give the House any information as to the losses of the inhabitants of Kafiristan during the recent invasion by the forces of the Amir:

And whether, if the military operations were renewed, Her Majesty's Government would arrange for a British officer to accompany the Afghan troops.

Lord G. HAMILTON: According to latest information received from the Government of India, the Kafirs were being disarmed and the property of those who had fled was being confiscated; but both the persons and property of those who remained were safe. No repressive measures are reported. About 150 Kafirs have sought refuge in Chitral. The Afghan troops under the Sipah Salar have withdrawn, and military operations are reported to be practically terminated. The Government of India have desired that telegraphic reports be sent to them from Chitral of any further operations.

It would not be possible to make arrangements by which a British officer should accompany any subsequent Afghan expedition.

February 21st.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

East India Council (re-appointment of Sir Donald Stewart). Copy presented of Minute by the Secretary of State for India extending the term of Field Marshal Sir Donald Stewart's office as Member of the Council of India, under Act 32 and 33 Vic., c. 97, s. 3 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

OPERATIONS IN THE PERSIAN GULF.

Sir CHARLES DILKE asked the Secretary of State for India if he could state to the House the reason for the operations conducted during last year in the Persian Gulf by Her Majesty's ships "Sphinx" and "Pigeon."

Lord G. HAMILTON: In consequence of quarrels between the Sheikh of Bahrein, who is under the suzerainty of Her Majesty, and other local sheikhs, the chief of the Ali-bin-Ali, apparently supported by the Turks, established himself on the mainland at Zobara, opposite Bahrein, and about 200 dhows assembled there to attack Bahrein.

In order to maintain the maritime peace to which the tribes are pledged, Commander Pelly of the "Sphinx" was authorised to resist this demonstration, provided he was satisfied that the dhows were assembled with a hostile purpose, and to liberate the Bahrein boats which had been forcibly detained.

As the dhows, after due warning, refused to disperse, they were attacked on the 6th September, and forty-four were destroyed. On the following day terms were arranged, and the peace of the Gulf re-established.